

GETTING STARTED**Weddings in Viet Nam**

1 Listen and read.



Maria: Hi Kevin! What are you reading?

Kevin: Hello Maria! I'm reading a book about Vietnamese weddings.

Maria: I see. Do you need the information for a school assignment?

Kevin: Yes. I'm preparing for my presentation about the similarities and differences between a traditional Vietnamese wedding and a modern one.

Maria: That's interesting! So what are the similarities?

Kevin: Both weddings include the proposal ceremony, the engagement ceremony and the wedding ceremony.

Maria: And the differences?

Kevin: The ceremonies are less complicated in modern weddings.

Maria: Sounds better. I guess the bride and groom will be much happier if they don't have to waste money on unnecessary things.

Kevin: Well, in fact, wedding expenses these days are much greater than in the past.

This unit includes:**LANGUAGE****Vocabulary**

Words and phrases related to traditions, cultural characteristics and superstitions

Pronunciation

Stress in two-syllable words with the same spelling

Grammar

- Comparative and superlative adjectives
- Articles

SKILLS

- Reading for specific information about superstitions in Viet Nam
- Comparing traditions and customs in two countries and discussing those in Viet Nam
- Listening for specific information about the wedding traditions of a small community in the USA
- Writing about the typical characteristics of the Vietnamese people

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Gift-giving in the UK and the ideas of success in the USA and Viet Nam.

Maria: Why's that? What's the biggest cost?

Kevin: The reception is the most expensive, especially if it is held in a big hotel.

Maria: I guess the couples get support from their families.

Kevin: Yes, of course. Some parents cover most expenses of the wedding. The bride and groom also get money as presents from the guests.

Maria: Sounds good. They're surely the happiest people on their wedding day no matter what the costs are!

Kevin: That's true.

Maria: Well, I have to go now. Good luck with your presentation!

Kevin: Goodbye!

2 What is the conversation about?

- The Vietnamese weddings
- The Vietnamese superstitions
- The Vietnamese idea of success

3 Read the conversation again and answer the questions.

1. Why is Kevin reading a book about Vietnamese weddings?
2. What are the similarities between a traditional Vietnamese wedding and a modern one?
3. How have wedding ceremonies changed?
4. Do the couples get any kind of support?
5. What do you think about these changes?

4 Prepare a short talk about weddings in Viet Nam and report to the whole class.

2 Circle the correct words in brackets to complete the sentences.

1. My cousin's (*marriage / wedding*) is next Sunday.
2. On the wedding day, the best man is expected to help the (*groom / bride*).
3. The (*groom / bride*) can have as many bridesmaids as she wants.
4. There is a wedding (*proposal / reception*) for all guests after the wedding ceremony.
5. There will be about 100 (*grooms / guests*) at my cousin's wedding.
6. In the past, the proposal and engagement ceremonies took place one or two years (*before / after*) the wedding.
7. My brother got (*engaged / married*) to one of his friends from college and started saving for the big day.

LANGUAGE

Vocabulary

1 Read the conversation in GETTING STARTED again. Match the words / phrases with their definitions.

1. proposal	a. a woman who is getting married or about to get married
2. engagement	b. a formal party to celebrate something
3. wedding	c. a man who is getting married or about to get married
4. reception	d. a ceremony at which two people are married to each other
5. bride	e. a formal agreement or promise to get married
6. bridegroom / groom	f. a formal social or religious occasion performed in accordance with customs
7. ceremony	g. a plan or suggestion; an offer of marriage

Pronunciation

1 Listen and repeat, paying attention to the stress patterns.

• •	• •
in'crease (v)	'increase (n)
de'crease (v)	'decrease (n)
per'fect (v)	'perfect (adj)
pre'sent (v)	'present (adj, n)
im'port (v)	'import (n)
ex'port (v)	'export (n)
pro'test (v)	'protest (n)
ob'ject (v)	'object (n)
re'bel (v)	'rebel (n)
con'trast (v)	'contrast (n)

2 Listen to the sentences and practise saying them correctly. Pay attention to the stress pattern of the underlined words.

1. There is an increase in the number of young people in Viet Nam who marry later in life.
2. In Viet Nam, guests often give money as a wedding present to the newly-married couple on their wedding day.
3. In big cities, the birth rate has decreased over the past few years.
4. In reality, it is difficult to meet the perfect life partner.

Grammar

Comparative and superlative adjectives

1 Do you agree with the following statements?

- Living in your country is *more interesting than* living abroad.
- Wedding ceremonies are *less complicated now than* they used to be in the past.
- The biggest expense* of a wedding is the reception.
- No one is *happier than* the bridegroom on the day of his wedding. He is *the happiest* person on that day.
- The bride is *the most beautiful* woman on her wedding day.
- It's *much better* to have a small wedding and save money.

2 Write five sentences comparing the two weddings in the table below. Use the comparative form of the adjectives in the box and *than*.

good expensive crowded old long

	Mr Smith's wedding	Mr Long's wedding
Number of guests	150 people	120 people
The cost of the reception	VND 50 million	VND 40 million
The groom's age	30 years old	28 years old
Engagement period	six months	two years
Service rating	★★★★	★★★

3 Choose the correct answers.

(1) (A / The) wedding is the ceremony where (2) (a / the) couple gets married. On their wedding day, (3) (a / the) bride and groom may exchange wedding gifts or rings. Before the wedding, the groom usually asks his brother, best friend or father to be his best man. (4) (A / The) best man helps the groom get ready for (5) (a / the) ceremony and makes sure nothing goes wrong at the wedding. The bride may have one or more bridesmaids. The bridesmaid keeps (6) (a / the) bride calm, helps her get ready and looks after her dress. After the wedding ceremony, there is usually (7) (a / the) reception for the guests. Traditionally, the bride and groom go on their honeymoon immediately after (8) (a / the) wedding reception. Nowadays, (9) (a / the) majority of couples wait for a few days before they leave on honeymoon.

Do you know ...?

	Comparative	Superlative
Short adjectives big happy few	bigger happier / less happy fewer	the biggest the happiest the fewest
Long adjectives interesting complicated	more / less interesting more / less complicated	the most / least interesting the most / least complicated
Irregular adjectives bad good many/much little	worse better more less	the worst the best the most the least

Note:

We tend not to use *less* and *least* to form comparatives and superlatives with one syllable adjectives, for example, *bigger/smaller*. We use the opposite instead.

Do you know ...?

- We use *a/an* with a countable noun when we first mention it and *the* after that.

Example:

*He is planning a wedding reception.
He has invited 100 people to the wedding reception.*

- We use *the* when it is clear in the situation which thing or person we mean.

Example:

The bride looks very happy.

SKILLS

Reading

Are you superstitious?

1 Are the following statements true for you?

1. Before doing something important, I always choose a favourable time for it.
2. I never visit people's homes on the first day of the New Year unless they invite me.
3. I never sweep the floor during the first three days of the New Year.
4. When I set out for an examination, I always try to avoid crossing the path of a woman.
5. On important days throughout the year I always lay food on the altar for my ancestors because I believe that they will enjoy the meal with my family.



2 Read the text and answer the following questions by circling the best option A, B, C, or D.

Superstitions still play an important part of life for many people in Viet Nam. For example, a lot of people choose a favourable date for occasions such as weddings, funerals, or house moving days. Some people may argue that being superstitious has no place in today's society. However, superstitions have existed in all human societies throughout history. As a country situated in Asia, where many mysteries, and legends originate, Viet Nam has also kept various superstitious beliefs about daily activities.

There are numerous rituals related to daily activities. During the Vietnamese New Year, for example, many people believe that the first person who visits their home on the first day of the new year will affect their life. Thus, they try to choose this person very carefully. If this person is rich, prestigious or happy, then the family will have good fortune that year. People also believe that if you sweep the floor during the first three days of the festival, you might sweep out any wealth. For other things, such as setting out for an examination or starting up a business venture, people will try to avoid crossing the path of a woman as this may not bring good luck to them.

As for traditional beliefs, Vietnamese people strongly believe in life after death. They think that their ancestors have gone to live in another world. So, the altar is believed to be the place where the ancestors' souls live in. That's why on many days of the year, people not only lay the table for meals, but they also lay food on the altar so their ancestors will join them for the meal.

1. What is true about Vietnamese society?
 - A. Only few people in Viet Nam are superstitious.
 - B. People used to be superstitious in the past, but not now.
 - C. Superstitions are part of life for the majority of Vietnamese people.
 - D. All people in Viet Nam are superstitious.
2. How does the writer explain the origin of Vietnamese superstitions?
 - A. They are based on scientific research.
 - B. Viet Nam is located in part of the world where many mysteries and legends exist.
 - C. Superstitions are beliefs about the supernatural.
 - D. These are government rules that everyone must follow.
3. Which of the following is mentioned as a superstitious belief?
 - A. People don't care much about the first person who visits their home on the first day of the New Year.
 - B. People never choose the person who visits their house on the first day of the year.
 - C. People believe that they will bring good fortune to their family if they work hard during the Tet holiday.
 - D. People believe their first guest on the first day of the new year will affect the family prosperity for the whole year.
4. Why do people lay food on the altar?
 - A. They believe that their ancestors will enjoy the meal with them.
 - B. The altar can be used as a table to lay food.
 - C. They put the food there for later use.
 - D. They don't know why they put it there.

3 Discuss the following with a partner.

Are you a superstitious person? Why / Why not?

Speaking

Traditions around the world



1 Do the quiz. Then read the information in 2 and check your answers.

- The sandwich was invented in ...
 - Russia
 - The UK
- People believe that black cats will bring bad luck in ...
 - Russia
 - The UK
- In ... it is believed that the bride should wear 'something borrowed, something blue, something old and something new', for good luck.
 - Russia
 - The UK
- People in ... believe that 'money goes to money'.
 - Russia
 - The UK

2 Work in groups. Each group reads about one country, either the UK or Russia, noting down the most interesting things about that country. Share the information with other members of your group.

Example:

Student A: I think the most interesting thing about ... is that ...

Student B: Do you? I think ... is more interesting.

Student C: I agree with B. I find ... the most interesting.

Traditions and customs in ...

The UK

- Britain is a tea-drinking nation. British people drink more than 160 million cups of tea every day. The traditional national food of England is fish and chips. The sandwich was invented in England in 1762.
- The British usually pay a lot of attention to good table manners, and are expected to use knives, forks and spoons properly. The fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right hand.
- Sports play an important part in British life, and many of the world's sports originate in the UK. Football is the most popular sport.
- People believe that it is lucky to meet a black cat, touch wood or find a clover plant with four leaves. For good luck, the bride should wear 'something borrowed, something blue, something old and something new'.
- It is believed that it is unlucky to walk under a ladder, break a mirror, see one magpie, or open an umbrella indoors.

Russia

- A very popular drink in Russia is tea, ideally served from a samovar. Traditional dishes include dumplings with meat fillings, and red soup made with beetroot. Russians use standard European table manners.
- Among the most popular sports in Russia are football, ice hockey, volleyball, figure skating and chess.
- People believe that broken mirrors, whistling indoors and black cats will bring bad luck. They will wait for someone else to pass the black cat and take the bad luck with them.
- Russians believe that 'money goes to money' so they leave coins scattered around their homes in bags, cupboards and drawers.

3 Work with a partner from a different group. Share with each other what you have learnt about traditions and customs of either the UK or Russia.

Example:

Student A: I read about the UK. What I find interesting about the British is that ...

In addition, they ... The most interesting/strangest... thing about them is that ...

Student B: Sounds interesting. I read about Russia. What I like about their traditions and customs is

- 4 Work in groups. Each group makes a list of popular foods and drinks, popular sports, and festivals in Viet Nam. Rank them in the order of popularity and present them to the whole class.**

Suggested ideas:

- Foods:** Chung cake (square sticky rice cake), Pho (rice noodles), Nem (spring rolls)
- Drinks:** tea, coffee, soft drinks, fruit juice
- Sports:** football, volleyball, table tennis, tennis, wrestling
- Festivals:** Tet holiday, Christmas, Mid-autumn festival

Example:

- Student A:** I think the most popular food for Vietnamese people is Pho. It tastes better than any other food.
- Student B:** Oh really? For me, Nem (spring rolls) is the best.
- Student C:** I don't really think so. Chung cake is more popular than Nem.

Listening

Cultural diversity

- 1 You are going to listen to a talk about the wedding traditions of the Amish community living in Pennsylvania, the USA. Make your own predictions about them by deciding whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).**

1. _____ Amish weddings take place in the spring.
2. _____ Amish parents choose life partners for their children.
3. _____ The wedding service is held at the bride's parents' home.
4. _____ The couple spends the first night at the bride's home.
5. _____ After getting married, a man begins to grow his beard.



- 2 Listen to the talk and check your answers in 1.**
- 3 Listen to the talk again and complete the missing information, using no more than three words.**

Most Pennsylvania Amish weddings take place from late October through (1) _____ on Tuesdays and Thursdays. During the wedding season, some Amish go to (2) _____ weddings in one day.

Amish parents don't select who their children will marry, but (3) _____ must be given. After the wedding service at the house of the bride's parents, benches are put together to form tables for the (4) _____ for about 200 to 300 guests. After spending the night at the bride's home, the newly-weds help with the clean-up from the day before. The couple then spends the following weekends (5) _____, sometimes stopping at five or six houses between Friday and Sunday night. Wedding gifts are usually given to them at this time.

- 4 Work in pairs. Name three things you have learnt about the Amish wedding customs. Did you find anything unusual or interesting? Tell your partner.**

Writing

How are we different?



1 The following jumbled-up paragraphs are from a text about typical American characteristics. Put them in order to make a meaningful text.

- In short, these features are believed to be part of the American character, but like many other things in modern society, they may change over time.*
- America is a large country with people from different backgrounds and races so it is difficult to talk about the typical American. However, it is believed that there are some characteristics shared by most Americans.*
- Another typical American feature is the importance they place on money and the things it can buy. In fact, money is more important than prestige to them.*
- Perhaps the most important of these is individuality and individual rights. This characteristic originates in the days of the founding fathers, who were very strong individuals. Americans value freedom and do not like to be dependent on other people.*
- Finally, in most American families, parents have less influence on their children than parents in other parts of the world. Children can choose their own partners, even if their parents object to their choice.*
- The second characteristic is that Americans are practical. They place great value on doing things for themselves. They also avoid taking jobs which are beyond their ability.*

The correct order is:

1 ___ ; 2 ___ ; 3 ___ ; 4 ___ ; 5 ___ ; 6 ___ .

2 Read the text again and complete the outline for it.

Introduction:

.....

Characteristic 1:

Evidence:

Characteristic 2:

Evidence:

Characteristic 3:

Evidence:

Characteristic 4:

Evidence:

Conclusion:

.....

3 Work in groups. Think of three typical characteristics of the Vietnamese people and examples to support each of them. Then write a short text of 150-180 words about these characteristics, using the outline in **2**.



Communication



1 Read some information about gift-giving in the UK. Read about each occasion and talk to a partner if you have a similar or different custom in Viet Nam.

- People in the UK often receive presents on Christmas Day and on their birthday.
- On Christmas Eve (24th December), parents often put presents for their children in Christmas stockings and leave them in the children's bedrooms when they are asleep. Children believe that the presents are from Santa Claus who comes in through the chimney.
- On their 18th birthday, when people become adults legally, they may also receive a silver key as a present to symbolise their entry into the adult world.
- Chocolate eggs are often given to children as presents at Easter, which is celebrated on a Sunday between 22nd March and 25th April.
- The most popular presents for mothers on Mother's Day are chocolates and flowers. Mother's Day is on a Sunday, and usually falls in the second half of March or the beginning of April.

Example 1:

Student A: I don't get presents on Christmas Day, but I get lucky money on New Year's Day.

Student B: Oh, really? I get presents on both Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Student A: Lucky you!

Example 2:

Student A: Do you give presents to your mother on Mother's Day?

Student B: No, I don't. But I give her flowers on Women's Day.

Student A: I do, too.

2 Put the following jumbled-up words and phrases to make questions about giving and receiving presents. Practise asking and answering the questions in pairs.

- for/who/presents/do/buy/you/often
_____?
- presents/on/buy/what/do/you/occasions
_____?
- shopping for presents/which shop/you're/do
you usually/when/go to
_____?
- the most/present/expensive/what's/you've/given
_____?
- on/presents/what/receive/you/occasions/do
_____?
- get/ what/you/normally/do/presents
_____?
- received/what/ever/is/the/you've/present/best
_____?

Culture

- 1 Read the two texts about the American and the Vietnamese ideas of success and answer the questions.



Success for the Americans

The American idea of success has not changed much over the several centuries of its existence. First, success has always meant providing their family with a decent standard of living. Second, as for career development, success means ending their career in a higher and more prosperous position than when they began it. To an American, it is clear that success is the result of hard work and self-reliance.

Success for the Vietnamese

For many people, the idea of success varies greatly. However, the Vietnamese share some common views about personal success. First, success always goes along with a high-status job with good income. Second, being respected at work also means success. To a Vietnamese, a successful person is someone with high status and is supported by all people involved in his job.

1. What is the American idea of success?
2. Who can be considered a successful person in Viet Nam?
3. What are the similarities / differences between the ideas of success in the two cultures?

LOOKING BACK

Pronunciation

- 1 Listen to some sentences and put the mark (') before the stressed syllable in the words below.

1. export
2. protest
3. contrast
4. import
5. object

Vocabulary

Complete the passage with one of the words / phrases from the box.

bridesmaids wife bride
honeymoon bridegroom get married
reception best man engaged
wedding

Jack, a friend of mine, told me a funny story. On the day he met his (1) _____ Rose, he asked her out on a date. They began to spend a lot of time together, and gradually they fell in love. One year later, they decided to (2) _____. Jack's family were very pleased when he introduced his fiancée to them, and Rose's parents were delighted that their daughter was (3) _____ to such a nice young man. A hotel near the church was booked for the wedding (4) _____ and the young couple planned to spend their (5) _____ in Hawaii.

On the day of the (6) _____, all guests arrived at the church. The (7) _____ was waiting there, with his eldest brother, who was his (8) _____. Why was Rose so late? He was worried and nearly thought that she had changed her mind. But the (9) _____ was also waiting at her house, with her (10) _____, for the wedding cars to arrive. Actually, her father had booked them for the wrong time. Fortunately, they managed to get to the church in the end and the ceremony took place.

Grammar

1 Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the adjective in brackets. Add any other words if necessary.

1. Is life much _____ (hard) or _____ (easy) for teenagers now than it was in the past?
2. Life is _____ (dangerous) today than it was 100 years ago.
3. Pho is _____ (famous) dish in Viet Nam.
4. Cities are a lot _____ (polluted) than they were in the past.
5. It was _____ (delicious) food I have ever eaten.

2 Correct the sentences, adding articles where necessary.

1. We are having great time in Ha Noi.

2. Let's go to Nha Trang for week next summer.

3. Where's money I gave you on first of this month? _____
4. For my birthday, I got book, DVD and latest CD by my favourite band. _____
5. On the radio, I heard song that I really liked.

PROJECT

As part of an education exchange programme, a group of foreign students will visit your school for two months. Your group will have to prepare a presentation for them in which you will describe some aspects of Vietnamese culture (e.g. *The rituals for certain festivals, table manners, typical characteristics of the Vietnamese people ...*) and some **Dos and Don'ts** to help them avoid embarrassment during their stay in Viet Nam.

Example:

Don't be the first visitor to someone's house on the first day of the Tet holiday unless you're invited.
Remember to invite other people to share the meal / snack with you before you start eating it.



NOW YOU CAN

- ▶ Use words and phrases related to cultural characteristics and lifestyles
- ▶ Pronounce correctly two-syllable words of different parts of speech but with the same spelling
- ▶ Use comparative and superlative adjectives and articles
- ▶ Understand the traditions and customs related to superstitious beliefs among Vietnamese people
- ▶ Talk about different customs and traditions of some countries, including Viet Nam
- ▶ Understand wedding rituals in a community in the USA
- ▶ Write a short text describing typical characteristics of the Vietnamese people